

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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S E C R E T SAIGON 11533

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID VS

SUBJECT: ECONOMIC REORGANIZATION

1. I EXPRESSED TO PRIME MINISTER KHIEM TODAY MY CONCERN OVER THE APPARENT SHORTCOMINGS IN THE PLAN FOR NATIONAL REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT RECENTLY ISSUED BY THE GVN. I TOLD HIM THAT I BELIEVED IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE USG UNDERSTAND THE STRUCTURE WHICH THE GVN HAD CREATED AND THAT THERE WERE TWO QUESTIONS ON WHICH I WOULD APPRECIATE HIS GUIDANCE.

2. FIRST, I FOUND IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY MINISTER DAN WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL. REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION SEEMED TO US TO FALL CLEARLY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THAT RETURN TO VILLAGE AND RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES WERE A MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF ASSISTING THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM TO RECOVER FROM THE HARDSHIPS AND DISCLOCATIONS CAUSED BY THE WAR. VERY LARGE SUMS OF MONEY WERE BEING EXPENDED FOR THIS PURPOSE AND THE ABSENCE OF DR. DAN FROM THE COUNCIL WHICH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED SEEMED TO ME TO BE MOST UNFORTUNATE.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE HAD WANTED DR. DAN TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE ON THE COUNCIL, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN OPPOSED TO IT. HE AGREED WITH ME THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT DR. DAN AND THE PROGRAMS HE CARRIES OUT BE GIVEN THE ATTENTION THEY DESERVE.

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4. THE SECOND QUESTION I RAISED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WAS THE SELECTION OF DR. ANH, THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL. I POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE OFFICIAL BEING GIVEN THIS RESPONSIBILITY HAD THE CONFIDENCE OF US OFFICIALS IN BOTH THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCH WHO INTEREST THEMSELVES IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF VIET-NAM. AS THE PRIME MINISTER KNEW, WE HAD RESERVATIONS WITH REGARD TO DR. ANH'S ABILITY AND WERE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THESE RESERVATIONS WERE SHARED BY MANY SENIOR GVN OFFICIALS.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT DR. ANH HAD BEEN THE PERSONAL CHOICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND THAT HIS OWN CANDIDATE HAD BEEN MINISTER NGOC WHOM HE CONSIDERED PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED AS WELL AS ENJOYING THE CONFIDENCE OF THE AMERICANS. THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED I MAKE BOTH THE FOREGOING POINTS WITH THE PRESIDENT AS HE AGREED WITH THEM AND BELIEVED THAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT BE WILLING TO RECONSIDER THE STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL IF THESE QUESTIONS WERE RAISED WITH HIM.
WHITEHOUSE

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